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EDITORIALS

PRESENT STATUS OF PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION

Special Meeting of the Council of the California Medical Association.—The California legislature is still in session at the date of this writing. The many public health measures which were enumerated last month in the Miscellaneous section of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE are being watched by members of the executive and legislative committees, and this surveillance will continue until the legislature adjourns. It is not necessary to again discuss in detail the many different bills.

Comment will be here made on some of the measures which came up for discussion at the special meeting of the Council of the California Medical Association, which was held at San Francisco on March 16; because these are the measures in which members of the California Medical Association should have particular interest, and it is proper that the members should know the conclusions reached by their colleagues whom they have delegated to represent them in the Council.

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Vocational Standards Department Bill—Other Departmental Consolidations.—This bill as originally drawn, in the days to come in case a governor appointed a department director who was not kindly disposed to or who had poor vision of

public health and medical professional standards, could have been a serious menace to all the standards which the members of the California Medical Association have worked for during the last twenty-five to fifty years. The officers of the California Medical Association were faced with a delicate situation in regard to this bill. Under ex-Governor Richardson's administration a consolidation of state executive departments and bureaus had been agitated and inaugurated, and under the present administration and Governor Young's leadership this consolidation has been successfully carried out with a large number of state agencies, and with the approval of the state at large. The right of the state to do its work in most efficient and economic fashion cannot be gainsaid. The difference of opinion arises on the subject of the procedures to be used.

The medical profession, two years ago, therefore took no exception to the coordination of the various departments of the State Board of Health, in which the executive officer, formerly known as its secretary, now acts as the director of the department, and has a place in the Governor's advisory board or cabinet.

Nor can the medical profession take a legitimate stand that would appeal to citizens at large, against the effort to group a dozen different state examining boards into one department. Provided, however, that the one examining board which above all others has a graver responsibility in the protection of the public health of California shall not have its powers so curtailed or jeopardized as to imperil the best public health interests of California.

It was on this point that conferences were held with the administration; and the general viewpoints of the officers of the California Medical Association, as expressed in Council meetings and printed in this journal, were presented to the representatives of the state administration. It is gratifying to know that the officials representing Governor Young considered every proposition presented by the California Medical Association committees in kindly fashion; and gave assurance that the safeguards suggested would be presented to the legislature as amendments worthy of incorporation into the bill.

As matters stand at this writing the administration proposes to have a department of professional and vocational standards, but its provisions will permit the California Board of Medical Examiners practically to have the same integrity and authority as existed before the bill was drafted.

For the reasons above given, the Council of the California Medical Association will not oppose the plan to have a department of professional standards, provided the safeguards agreed upon shall be made a part thereof. In passing it may be stated that it is reasonable to assume that these dozen or so examining boards would not be permitted to run loose, as it were, when practically all the other executive agencies of California have been grouped into departments. The question could therefore be fairly put, that if such a bill

as is now proposed were brought into being under an administration less kindly disposed to scientific medicine than that of Governor Young, as to how badly the California Board of Medical Examiners might then fare. The foregoing should make evident the fact that the various officers and committees of the California Medical Association have been alert to their responsibilities on behalf of the Association and its members, and have used every effort to protect the standards of licensure as applied to medical profession and public health interests. No special action is needed on this measure unless the call reaches the county units from the authorized officers of the Association.

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State Medical Library Bill.—This bill, which if enacted, would bring into being a medical library at Sacramento as one of the units of the state library there located, has had a narrow escape from early death. It was necessary to greatly modify the original draft to make it better fit in with the agencies already existing for library work. Unfortunately this was not discovered until the beginning of the second portion of the legislative session, during which period only a very limited number of bills may be introduced, and then only with the sanction of two-thirds of the members of either house. In spite of this heavy handicap it was possible, after an effort of some days, to have the bill reintroduced in its new form, and it is hoped, inasmuch as every effort was made to have the measure conform to all administration requirements, to have it go on to passage.

This medical unit of the state library would come into existence with an appropriation of about \$100,000, allocated to the library board from reserve funds which are not needed by the California Board of Medical Examiners. It is fitting that these moneys received from doctors should be allocated to a medical library agency that will help make better doctors, who will thus be able to give better service to the citizens of California.

Every county society and every member of the California Medical Association should give this measure his fullest support. County societies should pass resolutions of endorsement, and should send copies thereof to every state senator and assemblyman. Members of the profession who believe in giving real support to an enterprise of this kind will also write letters, sending a copy to each senator and assemblyman, or at least to the senators and assemblymen from the counties in which they practice. The March issue of this journal, on pages 215 and 216, gave a complete roster of the state senate and assemblymen, with Sacramento addresses. Copies of all such letters of endorsement should also be sent to Governor C. C. Young, State Capitol, Sacramento.

The new number of the library bill is Senate Bill No. 842. Refer to it in your letter as: "S. B. No. 842, Senator Canepa, State Medical Library Bill."

The passage of this state medical library bill would make it possible for every member of the profession, whether located in an urban or rural

center, to have come to him the latest and other literature on any subject to which he wished to give further study. In essence it means making possible for every physician who so desires, a partial postgraduate medical course, to be taken at his own home and at his desk, in his leisure moments. That is something, the realization of which is devoutly to be wished for, and it is sincerely hoped that the members of the California Medical Association will rally to the support of the measure in such generous fashion that the legislators will be glad to vote for its enactment.*

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Other Bills.—Some of these have been discussed in this column in previous issues. CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE of March indicated how copies of these bills could be secured by county units and members of the California Medical Association who were interested.

Members of the Association who have suggestions to offer should feel free to send them to the central office of the California Medical Association at San Francisco, so that the suggestions may be forwarded to the proper officers of the Association for consideration.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES TO COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Cities and Counties Come Under the Industrial Practice Act.—In the October 1927 issue of this journal, page 527, mention was made of the obligation which legally rests on cities and counties and which requires them to give proper professional care to industrially injured employees who come under the provisions of the State Industrial Practice Act of California.

Mention and criticism were made of an improper custom which had grown up in some counties, whereby such industrially injured county employees were being placed under the professional care of nonsalaried attending physicians and surgeons of county hospitals, the counties in that way evading the payment of the professional fees laid down in the industrial practice law.

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A Case in Point.—In the July 1928 issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, page 46, under the caption "The Sale Price of a Doctor's Services," a case in point was cited, and it was stated that further comment might be later made of the outcome of the effort of the writer to have the rich county of Los Angeles meet an obligation which was legally incurred but which certain of its legally elected officers felt the county was not obligated to pay.

The principle at issue was plain. A county employee in a rural district, working in the road

* The Senate committee to which the State Medical Library bill "S. B. 842 (Senator V. C. Canepa)" was referred on March 15, was the "Senate Committee on Governmental Efficiency." Its members are: Senators Mueller (chairman), Baker, Breed, Cobb, Garrison, Jones, Herbert C. Maloney, Murphy, Nelson, Tubbs, and Weller.

It would be good policy to send a copy of letters of endorsement of the above bill to each of these committee-men, whose names and addresses appear in the March California and Western Medicine, page 215.